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ABSTRACT

This report is designed for educators who are involved in teaching, developing, or evaluating curriculum in the middle and junior high schools. It describes the content and application of Florida's eighth grade writing test, and it offers suggestions that might be helpful in preparing students for the assessment. The 1990 Florida legislature mandated the assessment of student writing at grades 4, 8, and 10. Within each classroom, students are randomly assigned one of two writing prompts. Eighth graders respond to a prompt that asks them to explain something (expository writing) or persuade (persuasive writing). Students are asked to plan their responses and write them within 45 minutes. The report is divided into these sections: (1) "What Is Effective Writing?"; (2) "The Florida Writing Assessment Program"; (3) "Scoring Method and Rubric Used in 1999"; (4) "Expository Responses from the 1999 Assessment"; and (5) "Persuasive Responses from the 1999 Assessment." The expository and persuasive responses contain actual samples of student essays from the test. Eight appendixes contain supplemental information about the assessment and 43 recommended readings for educators. (SLD)

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FLORIDA WRITES!

Grade 8

Report on the 1999 Assessment

TM030427

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Florida Writing Assessment Program

FLORIDA WRITES!
REPORT ON THE 1999 ASSESSMENT

GRADE 8

FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Assessment and Evaluation Services Section
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PREFACE

Dear Educators:

In order to improve statewide assessment in Florida and to test students' writing achievement, the 1990 Florida Legislature mandated the assessment of students' writing in grades 4, 8, and 10. The Florida Writing Assessment Program was established in response to this legislative action.

The development of this assessment began in fall 1990. The Assessment and Evaluation Services Section of the Department of Education reviewed the latest advances in writing assessment and conferred with writing and curriculum consultants from Florida and from other states with established writing assessment programs. The Department, with the assistance of advisory groups of teachers, school and district administrators, and citizens, developed the writing prompts (topics) and the scoring rubric (description of writing at each score point) and selected student responses to represent each score point.

For this assessment, each student is given a writing folder containing a prompt. Students are given 45 minutes to read the prompt independently, plan their responses, and write their responses in the folders. A separate sheet is provided for planning and prewriting activities (e.g., outlining, clustering, mapping, and jotting down ideas). Within each classroom, students are randomly assigned one of two prompts. Fourth grade students respond to a prompt that asks them to explain (expository writing) or tell a story (narrative writing); eighth and tenth grade students respond to a prompt that asks them to explain (expository writing) or persuade (persuasive writing). See Appendix D for examples of the writing folder, planning sheet, and assessment directions given to students.

Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 8 is designed for educators who are involved in teaching, developing, or evaluating curriculum in the junior high or middle schools. This publication describes the content and application of the grade 8 writing test, and it offers suggestions for activities that may be helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

If you have questions, please ask your school coordinator or district coordinator of assessment for assistance. Further, the staff of the Assessment and Evaluation Services Section is available to respond to questions concerning the writing assessment or this publication. Please write or telephone

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?	1
Effective Writing Described	1
Achieving Effective Writing	1
Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability	1
Florida's Direct Writing Assessment	2
Preparing Students for the Florida Writing Assessment	2
THE FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM	3
Description of the Writing Prompts	3
Example of an Expository Prompt	3
Example of a Persuasive Prompt	3
Scoring of the Spring 1999 Assessment	4
SCORING METHOD AND RUBRIC USED IN 1999	5
Definition of Holistic Scoring	5
Focus	5
Organization	5
Support	5
Conventions	6
Score Points in Rubric	6
6 Points	6
5 Points	6
4 Points	6
3 Points	7
2 Points	7
1 Point	7
Unscorable	7
EXPOSITORY RESPONSES FROM THE 1999 ASSESSMENT	8
Definition of Expository Writing	8
Description of the Expository Prompt Used in 1999	8
Summary of the Expository Responses Written in 1999	8
Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses	8

Page

PERSUASIVE RESPONSES FROM THE 1999 ASSESSMENT 28
Definition of Persuasive Writing 28
Description of the Persuasive Prompt Used in 1999 28
Summary of the Persuasive Responses Written in 1999 28
Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses 28

APPENDIX A — MEMBERS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE WRITING ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 50

APPENDIX B — GLOSSARY 51

APPENDIX C — SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT 53

APPENDIX D — EXAMPLES OF THE ASSESSMENT DIRECTIONS, WRITING FOLDER, AND PLANNING SHEET 56

APPENDIX E — PROMPT SPECIFICATIONS AND COMMITTEE EVALUATION FORM 62

APPENDIX F — READER BIAS 65

APPENDIX G — INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR EACH SCORE POINT 66

APPENDIX H — RECOMMENDED READINGS 69

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?

EFFECTIVE WRITING DESCRIBED

A well-written piece can best be described as incorporating elements of writing in such a way that a reader can experience the writer's intended meaning, understand the writer's premise, and accept or reject the writer's point of view. Effective writing

- focuses on the topic and avoids extraneous or loosely related information;
- establishes a clear organizational pattern (a beginning, middle, and end and transitional devices) that enables the reader to follow the flow of ideas;
- contains supporting ideas that are elaborated through the use of details, examples, vivid language, and mature word choice; and
- follows the conventions of standard written English (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) and includes a variety of sentence structures.

ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE WRITING

The best way to teach writing is to engage students in the writing process. This recursive process includes planning, writing, revising, and editing.

As students become more proficient, the amount of time they spend on each step in the process may shorten, and the necessity for teacher involvement should lessen.

FLORIDA'S SYSTEM OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability provides direct guidance for writing instruction. Of the seven goals set forth, Goal 3 - Student Performance, is of particular importance to the instruction of writing. As defined by Standard 2 of Goal 3, students will "record information in writing; compose and create communications; accurately use language, graphic representations, styles, organizations, and formats appropriate to the language, information, concept, or idea and the subject matter, purpose, and audience; and include supporting documentation and detail." The Sunshine State Standards support the use of effective writing as outlined in the Language Arts Writing Strand benchmarks, which identify the highest expectations for student writing as defined by score point 6 of the Florida Writing Assessment Program rubrics.

The competencies listed in Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability are integral to all aspects of writing instruction and, with the Sunshine State Standards for language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, health/physical education, and foreign languages, form the basis of learner expectancies and lifelong writing skills.

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FLORIDA'S DIRECT WRITING ASSESSMENT

In the past decade, teachers, school districts, state departments of education, and national assessment programs have attempted to move away from multiple-choice tests and toward the direct assessment of writing proficiency. Direct writing assessment applies many of the principles used by exemplary teachers to develop effective writing.

In striving to standardize direct writing assessment, educators have discovered that large-scale assessments involve inherent limitations. While a classroom teacher has the luxury of making notes and adding personal comments on students' papers, this type of feedback is impossible in a large-scale assessment in which several hundred thousand student papers must be read and scored. On the other hand, the strength of a large-scale assessment is that all student papers can be judged against a common standard. The result is a source of statewide information that can be used to characterize writing performance on a consistent basis. This information can be used as one indicator of a writing instruction program's strengths and weaknesses.

Florida's direct writing assessment can best be described as demand writing. Demand writing assessments involve assigned topics, timed writings (e.g., 45 minutes), and scored responses. This kind of assessment has been used in classrooms (e.g., essay questions on a social studies test), in several large-scale assessments (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], the Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT], the American College Testing Program [ACT], and Florida's College-Level Academic Skills Test [CLAST]), and by many employers during the job interview process. For a statewide assessment, demand writing involves less preparation time for students and teachers and less time and money for scoring than project or portfolio assessments. (See Appendix B for definitions of project and portfolio assessments.)

The Florida Writing Assessment Program has adopted demand writing as an efficient and effective method of assessing Florida's eighth graders. For this program, students are expected to produce, within a 45-minute time period, a focused, organized, supported **draft** in response to an assigned topic.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT

The skill of effective writing cannot be taught in several easy lessons. By giving students frequent opportunities to express themselves, teachers and parents can enhance students' success in writing. A curriculum that consistently emphasizes reading and the use of spoken and written language in all subject areas and at all grade levels will increase students' ability to write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Appendix C contains suggestions for how district- and school-level administrators, teachers, and parents or guardians can help prepare students for the assessment.

THE FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING PROMPTS

The prompts for the 1999 assessment were carefully selected to ensure that the subject matter was interesting and appropriate for eighth grade students. In addition, prompts were reviewed for offensive or biased language relating to religion, gender, and racial or ethnic background.

All prompts were written with the assistance of members of the Eighth Grade Writing Assessment Advisory Committee and were pilot tested on a small group of students, then field tested on 1,000 students across the state. The development of prompts is a continuing process. The Department will continue to write, review, pilot test, and field test additional prompts for measuring writing proficiency. See Appendix E for more information on the procedures used by the advisory committee to write and review prompts.

Prompts are written to elicit writing for specific purposes. For instance, expository prompts ask students to explain why or how, and persuasive prompts require students to convince a person to accept a point of view or to take a particular action.

Prompts have two basic components: the writing situation and the directions for writing. The writing situation orients students to the subject about which they are to write. The directions for writing set the parameters for writing and, in the case of persuasive prompts, identify the audience to whom the writing is to be directed.

Example of an Expository Prompt

Below is an example of an expository prompt. The first component orients the student to the topic: jobs or chores. The second component suggests that the student think about various jobs or chores, then write about the reasons he or she does the job or chore.

Writing Situation:

Everyone has jobs or chores.

Directions for Writing:

Think about why you do one of your jobs or chores.

Now explain why you do your job or chore.

Example of a Persuasive Prompt

In the prompt below, the first component (the topic) focuses on the effects of watching television. The second component suggests that the student think about how watching television affects grades, then write about the reasons the school principal should accept the student's point of view.

Writing Situation:

The principal of your school has been asked to discuss with a parent group the effect watching TV has on students' grades.

Directions for Writing:

Think about the effect watching TV has on your grades and your friends' grades.

Now write to convince your principal to accept your point of view on the effect watching TV has on grades.

SCORING OF THE SPRING 1999 ASSESSMENT

Students' papers were scored in April. Prior to the scoring session, members of the advisory committee met on two separate occasions to read student responses and to select papers to represent each score point. These papers were then used by the scoring subcontractor, Measurement Incorporated, to train the readers.

As a service to the districts, 40 teachers and school- and district-level administrators were trained along with the 200 readers who were hired to score the responses. The actual readers for the three-week scoring session were Florida residents who were required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education, English, or a related field and to satisfactorily complete the training session.

As part of the actual scoring session, readers first took part in three days of intensive training. Each reader scored one of the two types of writing. The scoring director and team leaders for each type of writing were responsible for training and assisting readers during the scoring. A scoring guide that contained the scoring rubric and example papers for each score point provided the basis for developing a common understanding of the standards recommended by the advisory committee. To ensure accuracy in the scoring, readers were required to adhere to the advisory committee's standards during the scoring session. Appendix F lists the potential reader bias issues discussed with the readers.

While the actual scoring was taking place, the scoring directors and team leaders verified the scores readers assigned to papers and answered the questions readers asked about unusual and unscorable papers. Additional methods used to ensure that all readers were adhering to scoring standards included having two readers score each student response and having readers score sets of papers that had been prescored by the advisory committee.

SCORING METHOD AND RUBRIC USED IN 1999

DEFINITION OF HOLISTIC SCORING

Holistic scoring is a method by which trained readers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality. The holistic method used in Florida requires readers to evaluate the work as a whole, while considering four elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions. This method is sometimes called focused holistic scoring. In this type of scoring, readers make a judgment about the entire response rather than focusing exclusively on any one aspect.

Focus

Focus refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point.

- Papers receiving lower and middle scores may contain information that is loosely related, extraneous, or both.
- Papers receiving higher scores demonstrate a consistent awareness of the topic and avoid loosely related or extraneous information.

Organization

Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the relationship of one point to another. Organization refers to the use of transitional devices (terms, phrases, and variations in sentence structure) to signal (1) the relationship of the supporting ideas to the main idea, theme, or unifying point and (2) the connections between and among sentences.

- Papers receiving lower scores may lack transitional devices and summary or concluding statements.
- Papers receiving higher scores use transitional devices (signals of the text plan or stucture) and developed conclusions.

Support

Support refers to the quality of details used to explain, clarify, or define. The quality of the support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, credibility, and thoroughness.

- Papers receiving lower and middle scores may contain support that is a bare list of events or reasons, support that is extended by a detail, or both.
- Papers receiving higher scores provide elaborated examples and fully developed illustrations, and the relationship between the supporting ideas and the topic is clear.

Conventions

Conventions refer to the punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure. These conventions are basic writing skills included in Florida's Sunshine State Standards.

- Papers receiving lower and middle scores may contain some or many errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure and may have little variation in sentence structure.
- Papers receiving higher scores follow, with few exceptions, the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, and use a variety of sentence structures to present ideas.

SCORE POINTS IN RUBRIC

The rubric further interprets the four major areas of consideration into levels of achievement. The rubric used to score papers in spring 1999 is shown below.

6 Points

The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. The paper conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete, and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language (word choice) with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, and punctuation.

5 Points

The writing focuses on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas, although some lapses may occur. The paper conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness. The support is ample. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. There is variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

4 Points

The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern is apparent, although some lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The support, including word choice, is adequate, although development may be uneven. There is little variation in sentence structure, and most sentences are complete. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

3 Points

The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some support is included, but development is erratic. Word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

2 Points

The writing is related to the topic but includes extraneous or loosely related material. Little evidence of an organizational pattern may be demonstrated, and the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Development of support is inadequate or illogical. Word choice is limited, inappropriate, or vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure, and gross errors in sentence structure may occur. Errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

1 Point

The writing may only minimally address the topic. The paper is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both. Little, if any, development of support or an organizational pattern or both is apparent. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Unscorable

The paper is unscorable because

- the response is not related to what the prompt requested the student to do,
- the response is simply a rewording of the prompt,
- the response is a copy of a published work,
- the student refused to write,
- the response is written in a foreign language,
- the response is illegible,
- the response is incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed),
- the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt, or
- the writing folder is blank.

Appendix G contains instructional implications for each score point.

EXPOSITORY RESPONSES FROM THE 1999 ASSESSMENT

DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY WRITING

The purpose of this type of writing is to inform, clarify, explain, define, or instruct by giving information, explaining why or how, clarifying a process, or defining a concept. Well-written exposition has a clear, central focus developed through a carefully crafted presentation of facts, examples, or definitions that enhance the reader's understanding. These facts, examples, and definitions are objective and not dependent on emotion, although the writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPOSITORY PROMPT USED IN 1999

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to explain why a person is their hero. Students were asked to give an explanation that would enable the reader of their paper to understand why a person is their hero.

SUMMARY OF THE EXPOSITORY RESPONSES WRITTEN IN 1999

Students responding to this prompt generally selected one person as their hero. A paper was scorable if the student chose one person as his or her hero and provided an explanation for that choice. Papers that focused on one particular person, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed support (reasons), and generally followed the conventions of writing were scored in the higher ranges of the scale.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF THE ANNOTATED RESPONSES

Each response in this publication is annotated to explain why it was assigned a particular score. Teachers may use the responses on the following pages to improve students' writing skills and to help students understand the scoring criteria. Teachers can also delete the scores and annotations and make transparencies or copies of the responses. They can then ask students to

- rank order the responses from highest to lowest scores;
- highlight words and phrases that provide an organizational structure and develop the supporting ideas in a response;
- list the strengths and weaknesses of a response;
- revise and edit a response based on either a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or the annotation beneath the response. This activity might include improving the introduction and conclusion, adding transitional devices, providing more details and examples, refining the word choice, and varying the sentence structure; and
- use the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar writing prompts.

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With every blink of an eye, a hero is born. Sometimes a hero becomes a hero because of one spectacular moment, or sometimes because of a life filled with breath-taking events. However, my hero, Charlie Ward, wasn't made up of big moments or memorable events; it was that every second he lived he was hero because every second he did the most good he could do. To me, there were three different Charlie Ward's; there was the swift athlete, the quiet leader, and last there was the motivater. All this forms on equation: athlete + leader + motivater = hero.

First there was Charlie Ward the athlete. Probably along with Deion Sanders the most heralded two-sport star in Florida State history, He came to a college trying to put itself on the map in sports. After being redshirted in football his freshman year in 1989, he then watched the team go on and twice came close to a National Championship. In 1992 he finally got the chance to start at quarterback, He had a stellar season and produced an 11-1 season. Then came the incredible season of 1993. In the course of eight-and-a-half months Charlie Ward led the football team to it's first ever National Championship, the basketball team to it's first ever Elite 8 appearance, and won the Heisman Trophy as the best college football player in America. Despite all he did in football Charlie's destination was to play in the NBA with the New York Knicks.

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Then there is the phase of Charlie Ward that is a leader. As a football player he was a quarterback which demonstrates more leadership abilities than any other in football. As a basketball player he was a point guard which to put simply, is the quarterback of the basketball team. He played these two positions with an agileness I have never before seen in my life. Yet with all the attention he had he never once acted stuck up, but was quiet, calm, and did nothing but give praise to others.

Last there was Charlie Ward the motivator. He constantly contributed to charities all across the Southeast and gave time to those people who really needed attention. He did numerous television commercials with the objectives of staying in school, taking ACTs and SATs, and maintaing a high GPA. During that 1993 football season Charlie Ward roomed with a bright young star named Warrick Dunn. Ward was very influential on Dunn who is now a bright young star in the NFL.

Heros can be made up of many things. A hero can be an athlete a leader or a motivator. In Charlie Ward's case he was all three. Yet he is rarely every recognized around the country as a hero, and if you ask me, that's the way he wants it to stay.

Score Point 6

The writing is focused and purposeful. The organizational pattern allows the reader to examine "three different Charlie Ward's; there was the swift athlete, the quiet leader, and last there was the motivater." Ideas progress logically, and transitional devices are used effectively. Support for each reason is substantial and specific: "Then came the incredible season of 1993. In the course of eight-and-half-months Charlie Ward led the football team to its first ever National Championship, the basketball team to it's first ever Elite 8 appearance, and won the Heisman Trophy as the best college football player in America." The writer demonstrates a mature command of language, freshness of expression, and involvement with the subject: "A hero can be an athlete, a leader or a motivator. In Charlie Ward's case he was all three. Yet he is rarely every recognized around the country as a hero, and if you ask me, that's the way he wants it to stay." Sentence structure is varied, and occasional errors in punctuation do not interfere with meaning.

Little children often say, "Superman's my hero!" or "My hero is Wonder Woman." But I'm not a little child. If I were to think of someone as my hero, I would have to say my father. My father is brave, he is fair, and he is a loving father. I look up to him as a role model for several different reasons, all very important.

My father is very brave. For instance, my daddy was drafted into the army at about the time I was five, if I recall correctly. I begged him not to go, he drove away the next morning nevertheless, leaving a note behind on my pillow. I read it and cried, remembering that my father could be fighting for our country as I was at school. The image of my father clothed in army fatigues and holding a gun, warding off enemies from the fort, drilled into my mind. But he came home, unharmed, and I was proud he was home, safe.

Secondly, my father is fair and peaceful. When my brother and I quarrel over something stupid, like a video game, my father takes the matter seriously and into consideration. Then, he will revise a plan to make us both happy, and to keep the house quiet. He'll say, "Okay. (my brother) can play until finishes her homework and eats. Then will play while eats and takes a shower, then I play!"

Moreover, my father is a sweet, kind, loving person. For an example, remember the letter he wrote to me above? It read: "Dear , Daddy has to go away for a few days. I'll be back really soon, you won't

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even know I'm gone! Take care of and be a brave leader till I get back. Lot's of love, Daddy." He drew a funny little cartoon on the bottom of a stick figure with a helmet and boots too large for its body. It had a huge smiley face and its tounge hung out of it's mouth. Next to that he wrote "I love you". He has supported me, given me love and understands my sudden obsession with Hanson, 'N Sync, No Authority and Backstreet Boys. He takes it all in a stride along with my quarrels with my younger brother and my pounding music.

I love my Father, and he really is a hero for putting up with me and my brother! He's brave and fair and loving, just like every father should be. He has put and kept a roof over my head, food in my stomach and clothes on my back. I love him and wouldn't change him for anything. My Father, my hero, my hope.

Score Point 6

The response is focused and organized. A logical progression of reasons, with effective transitional devices, is provided. Support for each reason is substantial and specific. Throughout the response, personal examples are cited and elaborated to illustrate why the writer chooses Dad as the hero. The fourth paragraph references information provided in the first reason: "For an example, remember the letter he wrote to me above?" A mature command of language, with precise word choice and freshness of expression, is demonstrated: "The image of my father clothed in army fatigues and holding a gun, warding off enemies from the fort, drilled into my mind. But he came home, unharmed, and I was proud he was home, safe . . . He has supported me, given me love and understands my sudden obsession with Hanson, 'N Sync, No Authority and Backstreet Boys. He takes it all in a stride along with my quarrels with my younger brother and my pounding music." Sentence structure is varied, and few convention errors occur.

19

Many young people now, have heroes like, Batman, Superman or actors and or actresses, but my hero would probably be my father. In general my dad does alot of stuff like, he is a 'QM', that is a Quarter Master first class, in the navy, he does construction work on the side, and he sings with this Band called . Those are the major reasons my father is my hero. Not many people can do many things and still have time for there kids.

My father has been in the navy for almost 18 years, and we have been from Virginia all the way down to the country Panama, but my dad has been everywhere. Imagine... your dad being on a ship with 82 other men, on his way to Sasebo, Japan, The Middle East, Brazil, Hawaii and other places, just to make a living and put food on the table. That only happens if you have sea-duty then, and are going on a 6 month deployment or a cruise. My dad does that because he loves us. Although, he may not show his affection he does.

My dad loves building stuff. He has been doing odd jobs like building an

R.P. Mc Murphys, or building a deck, or fence, or like now he is renovating an old resturant to make it into a record shop. He does many things to pay bills like building, and that I think is very heroic.

My dad also sings on the weekends at gigs or dances at this club named The , and he also does many festivals, and partys or quinceneras (that is a 15th 15-Day party that is a hispanic tradition.) My dad has been singing with Spanish Bands in general since I was about 8. That is basically what he does for fun on weekend nights and his rehearsals on Tuesday. In a way you could say it is his sanctuary from work.

My dad is a very busy man, yet he still has time for his kids, and wife. He, although realistically doesn't have time, he makes it, so we can go to the movies as a family or out to eat. My dad is a very important man to me, and I think if I didn't have him I wouldn't be the same. That is why my dad is and will always be my hero.

Score Point 5

This response is focused and organized. Support is ample, and each reason is elaborated with some specific information: "Imagine . . . your dad, being on a ship with 82 other men, on his way to Sasebo, Japan, The Middle East, Brazil, Hawaii and other places, just to make a living and put food on the table." However, the "building stuff" reason needs further explanation, and the command of language and word choice is not always mature and precise: "Those are the major reasons my father is my hero. Not many people can do many things and still have time for there kids." Sentence structure is varied, and conventions are generally followed.

For this reponse to receive a higher score, elaboration of support needs to be more consistent, command of language needs to be more mature, and choice of words needs to be more precise.

21

Having to choose who my hero is was a very hard decision. Finally, I decided on Rosie O'Donnell. She's famous & someone anybody can look up to, yet still is human. She is funny and nice. She also does In my opinion, Rosie O'Donnell is an excellent human being and should have many people looking up to her.

First of all, she's famous, which since I want to be an actress someday is very important to me. She has her own talk show, which according to our local TV station, even beat Oprah in ratings! She has met many famous people that I would like to meet someday. People like Sally Field, Barbara Streisand, Leonardo Di Caprio, Bush, and the list goes on and on! Rosie has also been on many movies. "The Flinstones", "Exit to Eden", "A League of their Own" and that list continues on as well.

She also hasn't let the fame go to her head and is therefore, very nice as well as funny! She makes many people laugh with her hilarious performances. She works for and donates to many charities. She's donated so much I can't even keep up with it! She's selling the "Rosie O'Doll" at

"K-mart" and "Toys R Us" and all the proceeds go to "charity" she doesn't get a penny! & he also has never insulted someone unless she was just kidding or they really deserved it.

Rosie has also not forgotten her fans. & he shows pictures on air or even just says a name. & he reads as much fan mail as humanly possible! Once, I sent her a letter, and she sent me back a picture autographed by her! & he even said my name on air! & he has a lot of sweepstakes and I always enter.

As you can see, my hero is definitely Rosie O'Donnell. & he's famous, funny, nice, human, charitable and never forgets her fans. She is my hero and no one can even come close to convensing me otherwise!

Score Point 5

In this response, the writer focuses on Rosie O'Donnell as his or her hero. Ample support is provided. The logical progression of ideas and development of support contribute to a sense of completeness. While the main ideas are well-developed with specific details, more elaboration would be expected for this response to receive a higher score. The main idea of paragraph two contains some list-like elaboration, and the writer fails to explain how Rosie O'Donnell is funny in paragraph three. The personal example provided in the fourth paragraph is not specific and seems to repeat information already provided: "Once, I sent her a letter, and she sent me back a picture autographed by her! She even said my name on air!" More details are needed to enhance the reader's understanding. There is some variation in sentence structure, word choice is sometimes precise, and conventions are generally correct.

To receive the highest score, this response needs more consistent support, more sentence variety, and more precise word choice.

23

Everybody has a role model or a hero. Well my hero is my mom because she trusts me, she considers my opinion, and also because she's there when I need her.

First I would just like to say that without trust, a family can't work. That's why my mom trust's me. She lets me go out, when I tell her something she trust me and believe's me. Without trust nobody could live because there would be anger and greed.

Secondly she considers my opinion which not many mothers do. She hear's me out and gives me a chance to confess or tell what really happened. Some mothers dont even ask they go straight to the punishment. Not my mom if she thinks I'm tell the truth she'll hear me out but if she knows I'm wrong she wont hear me out. Also if she's going to make an important decision she ask's me for my opinion and thats the kind of relationship I want with my mom.

Lastly the thing why I think my mom is my hero is because she's there when I need her the most. Whenever I want to go out she gives me the money. When something bad happens my mom is there to comfort me and

help me feel better. Also when one of us need something she gets when she can't. Even without money my mom is there to give us her love.

In conclusion I would like to say my mom is my hero and will alwsay's be my hero for three impotant reasons she trust me, she considers my opinion and she's there when I need her. So I think that everykody's hero should be their mother!!!

Score Point 4

This response is focused, and a topical organizational pattern is used: an introduction, a paragraph on each reason, and a conclusion. Support is provided for each reason, but development is uneven. The "considers my opinion" reason is elaborated with personal examples: "She hear's me out and gives me a chance to confess or tell what really happened. Some mothers dont even ask they go straight to the punishment. Not my mom" Also, the "there when I need her the most" reason in the fourth paragraph contains list-like elaboration. However, the "trust" reason in the second paragraph includes some loosely related information: "Without trust nobody could live because there would be anger and greed." Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure is varied. Conventions are generally followed.

Consistent elaboration of support and better choice of words are needed to improve this response.

25

If someone asked me who my hero is I'd pick Superman. I like him he's Simply the best hero ever. He's does good things and he has cool things he uses to help him in his quest for world peace.

One reason I like Superman is because he's always doing good things. He's frequently saving victims from the "bad guys" and then teaching the bad guys not to do evil things in the vicinity of his town, Metropolis.

Another reason I'd pick superman is all the cool things he can do. He can do what most people only dream of, fly. His flying abilities come in very handy when someone needs help far away. Another little thing is his heat vision. He can incinerate the toughest of foes with it. If the heat vision doesn't work he can always use his freeze breath. All these tricks could definately over power any oppressor.

There is still a drawback. Although he has phenomonal cosmic power, he wears tights. I wouldn't wear tights in public. I guess all heroes wear tights, look at Batman and Robin, even Robin Hood wore tights, supposedly.

So if someone did ask me who my hero is I'd pick Superman. Because he's, "faster than a bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap over buildings in a single bound, he's Superman!"

Score Point 4

This response focuses on the writer's hero, Superman. Organization is apparent. The writer uses a topical organizational pattern: an introduction, a middle section with extended support, and a brief conclusion. Some transitional devices are used. Although support is given for each of the three reasons ("good things," "cool things he can do," and "a drawback"), it is only adequate and is unevenly developed. The first and third reasons are extended, but the writer elaborates Superman's tricks in the second reason: "He can do what most people only dream of, fly. His flying abilities come in very handy when someone needs help far away. Another little thing is his heat vision. He can incinerate the toughest of foes with it. If the heat vision doesn't work he can always use his freeze breath. All these tricks could definately over power any oppressor." Word choice is adequate and, at times, precise ("vicinity," "incinerate," and "phenomonal cosmic power"). Although there are errors in sentence structure, the writer attempts to vary the structure. Errors in capitalization and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.

More consistent development of the supporting ideas, more effective use of transitional devices, more precise use of words, and better control of sentence structure and basic conventions would improve this response.

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"My Hero"

I consider a certain person to be my hero, and that person is Dennis Rodman. I consider him to be my hero, for 3 main reason. They are he is my favorite Basketball player. He is a nice guy (sometimes), and he was in alot of movies. In the following paragraphs I'm going to tell you why Dennis Rodman is my hero.

First of all, Dennis Rodeman is my hero because he is my favorite Basketball player. He is very aggressive on the court like I am. He plays for the Bulls, and the Bulls is my favorite basketball team. Also Rodman is my hero because of his hair. that hair looks very cool.

Secondly, Dennis Rodman is my hero because he has a good personality + he is a nice guy (sometimes). Also he has a very good sense of humor. I like Dennis Rodman's personality because I got the same as his. He's personality consites of many things.

Lastly, Dennis Rodman is my hero because he was in alot of cool movies. The movies he was in was Dable team, First strike, + many more. Also I liked every, single one of the movies he was in. They were all cool to me. I don't know about you.

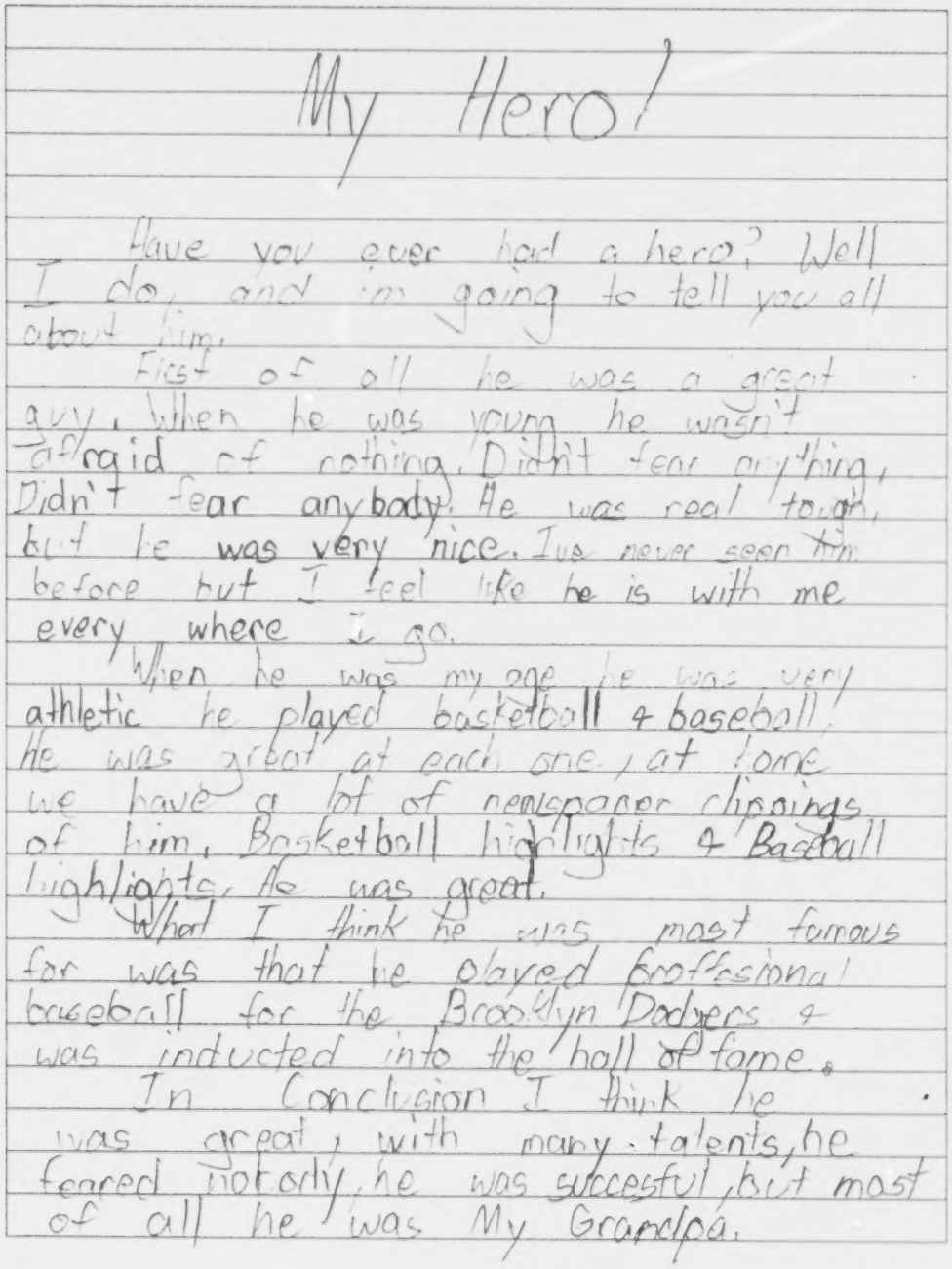
In conclusion, my favorite hero is Dennis Rodman, for 3 reasons. they are he is my favorite Basket ball player, He has a good personality, + he made alot of movies that were cool. There are many more reasons, But I couldn't think of them right at this moment.

27

Score Point 3

This response is focused, and an organizational pattern has been attempted. Support for each reason is extended with vague information: "Also he has a very good sense of humor. I like Dennis Rodman's personality because I got the same as his. He's personality consites of many things." Word choice is adequate, but at times limited and vague. Sentence structure is simplistic, but knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

To receive a higher score, this writer needs to provide stronger connections between ideas, develop more elaboration of support, demonstrate a better choice of words, use a wider variety of sentences, and show better control of conventions.



My Hero!

Have you ever had a hero? Well I do, and im going to tell you all about him.

Fiest of all he was a great guy, When he was young he wasn't afraid of nothing. Didn't fear anything, Didn't fear anybody. He was real tough, but he was very nice. Ive never seen him before but I feel like he is with me every where I go.

When he was my age he was very athletic he played basketball & baseball, he was great at each one, at home we have a lot of newspaper clippings of him, Basketball highlights & Baseball highlights. He was great.

What I think he was most famous for was that he played frotfesional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers & was inducted into the hall of fame.

In Conclusion I think he was great, with many talents, he feared notody, he was succesful, but most of all he was My Grandpa.

Score Point 3

This response is focused, and an organizational pattern has been attempted. There is a brief introduction, a middle section with reasons Grandpa is the writer's hero, and a brief conclusion. Some transitions are used effectively: "When he was young" and "When he was my age." Fragments are used purposefully: "When he was young he wasn't afraid of nothing. Didn't fear anything. Didn't fear anybody. He was real tough..." While the "What I think he was most famous for" reason is bare, the "When he was my age" reason is extended with little bits of information. Word choice is adequate and, at times, precise ("tough," "newspaper clippings," "highlights," and "inducted"). There is an attempt to vary sentence structure, and errors in basic conventions do not impede communication.

Development of an organizational pattern and effective transitional devices, extension and elaboration of support, precision in word choice, and correction of basic conventions are needed to improve this response.

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My hero

I don't really have a herro but if I had to chose it would be my Grandma. She has been there for me my entire life and she is always willing to do something. I remember once I had to rake the entire backyard and it was very big. She came out side and grabed another rake and helped me untill it was fineshed completly. My parents were on there honey moon then and the left alot of work for us to do but with my grandmas help we compleated it. I geus my my grandma is my favorite hero is becaus she was there she listines to me and she loves me.

Score Point 2

The focus of this paper is the writer's grandmother. An organizational pattern is demonstrated. The writer provides one reason why "Grandma" is chosen as the hero: "She has been there for me my entire life and she is always willing to do something." A personal example is given to illustrate Grandma's willingness to do something: "I remember once I had to rake the entire backyard and it was very big. She came out side and grabed another rake and helped me untill it was fineshed completly. My parents were on there honeymoon then and the left alot of work for us to do but with my grandmas help we completed it." Word choice is adequate, but there are errors in sentence structure, basic conventions, and spelling.

Development of an effective organizational pattern, extension and elaboration of support, improvement of sentence structure, and correction of basic convention and spelling errors would strengthen this response.

29

I would have to say that my mom is my hero She has always tried to help my family and other familys with anything they or we needed, and has always taken up for us and made sure we have food to eat and a roof over our heads. She has gone through alot in her life and has survived alot of bad things that have happened to her She doesnt drink or do any kind of drugs. She always tries to protect us from all of the bad things. She makes sure that us kids grow up right and have respect for others. Alot of the things she has been through would really be rough on me and I could not handle it at all. I just hope that she'll be around to see my graduation She really is a great mom and I admire everything she has done for me and other people. I would like to be like her one day.

Score Point 2

The focus of this response is the writer's mom. There is little organization (a one-sentence introduction, a two-sentence conclusion, and a middle section consisting of a rambling list of ways the writer's mom is helpful). The supporting details relate to the topic but lack sufficient development. Most details are bare. The one extended detail appears early in the paper: "She has gone through alot in her life and has survived alot of bad things that have happened to her." Additional information is given later: "Alot of the things she has been through would really be rough on me and I could not handle it at all." Word choice is limited and vague, and sentence structure is simplistic, but basic convention errors do not impede understanding.

The writer needs to develop an effective organizational pattern, elaborate the supporting ideas, use more precise word choice, and correct the convention errors to improve this response.

My hero is Martion Luther King because If it wasn't for him we probally would have not had alot of freedom if you know what I mean. I say he really made a total difference In how we are living today.

He did a good job in what he did for us and all of us and everybody should appricate it and be glad they are living well and ok today.

Score Point 1

This response focuses on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the writer's hero. There is no organizational pattern, and there are no transitional devices. Support consists of two bare reasons: "My hero is Martion Luther King because If it wasn't for him we probally would have not had alot of freedom if you know what I mean. I say he really made a total difference In how we are living today." No new information is provided in the second paragraph. The writer simply restates the first two reasons: "He did a good job in what he did for us and all of us and everybody should appricate it and be glad they are living well and ok today." Word choice is limited, and errors in sentence structure and basic conventions occur.

The writer needs to develop an organizational pattern with effective transitions, provide support with extensions and elaborations, use words with more precision, and correct errors in sentence structure and basic conventions to receive a higher score.

31

My Hero

My hero is my mother.
She is my hero because she has always
bin their for me thru good and bad.
She has bin there when otheer people
have not. That's why shes my hero.

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Score Point 1

This response focuses on Mother as the writer's hero. There is little evidence of an organizational pattern because the sentences are sparse and can be rearranged in any order and retain the same meaning. Transitions are needed to connect the sentences. Support consists of two bare reasons why Mother is the hero: "She is my hero because she has always bin their for me thru good and bad. She has bin there when otheer people have not." The writer needs to provide examples of the times the mother has been supportive. Word choice is limited and vague. Sentence structure is simplistic, and errors in spelling occur.

An improved organizational pattern, elaborated support, refined word choice, improved sentence structure, and corrected spelling are needed for a higher score.

fishing

fishing is a good sport to do becase it will comme you down and what i like to do is cought the fish and if they are big. I would eat them or maet them on my wall and that is wbat. I will do all my life. Becase you can mostly be on if you are a pro.

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Unscorable

This response is unscorable. The writing does not indicate that the writer read and attempted to respond to the prompt.

PERSUASIVE RESPONSES FROM THE 1999 ASSESSMENT

DEFINITION OF PERSUASIVE WRITING

The purpose of this type of writing is to convince the reader to accept a particular point of view or to take a specific action. If it is important to present other sides of an issue, the writer does so, but in a way that makes his or her position clear. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to convince the reader of something. In well-written persuasion, the topic or issue is clearly stated and elaborated as necessary to indicate understanding and conviction on the part of the writer.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSUASIVE PROMPT USED IN 1999

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to convince their local television station to hire them as a student reporter. Students were required to present arguments to support their being hired as a student reporter.

SUMMARY OF THE PERSUASIVE RESPONSES WRITTEN IN 1999

Students responding to this prompt generally provided several arguments to convince the local television station to hire them as a student reporter. A paper was considered scorable if a suggestion was made and arguments were given to support the student's position. Papers that focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed support (arguments), and generally followed the conventions of writing were scored in the higher ranges of the scale.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF THE ANNOTATED RESPONSES

Each response in this publication is annotated to explain why it was assigned a particular score. Teachers may use the responses on the following pages to improve students' writing skills and to help students understand the scoring criteria. Teachers can also delete the scores and annotations and make transparencies or copies of the responses. They can then ask students to

- rank order the responses from highest to lowest scores;
- highlight words and phrases that provide an organizational structure and develop the supporting ideas in a response;
- list the strengths and weaknesses of a response;
- revise and edit a response based on either a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or the annotation beneath the response. This activity might include improving the introduction and conclusion, adding transitional devices, providing more details and examples, refining the word choice, and varying the sentence structure; and
- use the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar writing prompts.

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Ever since I was a baby, I have been exposed to the news world. At an early age, I was given a toy microphone and tape recorder. These tools were my first steps into the world of broadcasting and television. All around me, my relatives were heading down the same path. By the time I was six, my eldest cousin was majoring in Communications, and my older sister was a reporter on her high school's afternoon news show. My parents nurtured my growing love for the world of journalism by giving me magazine subscriptions as birthday presents. At the age of nine, I was an avid reader of National Geographic, and a dedicated follower of TIME.

I gained my first reporting job at my elementary school. Every day, two students would broadcast the day's lunch menu, as well as upcoming club meetings. My best friend and I tried for the parts, and succeeded. Gradually, her interest began to fade, and I was paired with other partners. I learned the basic skills of speaking, communications, and journalism from that early job. It was the beginning of the rest of my life.

When I was ten years old, I received a phone call from my Aunt , who worked in the Public Relations department for CNN. She requested that I come to visit, as well as take the Studio Tour at the main building. Overjoyed, I accepted. On my second day

of visiting after arriving in Atlanta, Georgia, I went to work with . She introduced me to several of the 7,295 working people, including the night anchor woman, Lisa Terrance, and the cameraman, Steve Young. It was an exciting experience, and benefitted me greatly. The lessons I learned in the newsroom I took with me into my middle school years.

At Middle School, I decided to try for a coveted spot as a reporter on the afternoon news show. Using all of the skills that I had ever learned, I drafted a two-page long resume' of my job training and experience, as well as three shining reccomendations. Obviously impressed, the media director placed me on the daily anchoring spot. I have remained there for three years.

I have come a long way from my Fischer Price microphone and recorder. The loving support of my media-oriented family has brought me thus far. Without them, I might have given up, or not strived for my best. My school show experience has paid off as well. Learning to enunciate while reading off a teleprompter was the best lesson that I have learned in the progress of my career. This TV job would be yet another link in the journalistic chain of my life.

Score Point 6

The response is focused and purposeful, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The organizational pattern and substantial support provide a sense of completeness. Elaboration of the writer's interest in the "world of broadcasting and television" and the writer's qualifications for the job of student reporter demonstrate involvement with the subject: "At an early age, I was given a toy microphone and tape recorder. These tools were my first steps into the world of broadcasting and television." The clear presentation of ideas, mature command of language, and freshness of expression enhance the reader's understanding: "My parents nurtured my growing love for the world of journalism by giving me magazine subscriptions as birthday presents. At the age of nine, I was an avid reader of National Geographic, and a dedicated follower of TIME." Sentence structure is varied, and few convention errors occur.

36

¶ As I settle down on the family room sofa one night to watch our local news, I sigh and ponder my future. The anchors at NBC2, Kelly and Tom, pop onto the screen and begin to report the day's events. Soon, they come to a major story and prompt the tape to shift over to my favorite female reporter, Dianne Sawyer. She's beautiful, a wonderful speaker, tactful and sympathetic (when she has to report on a gloomy or catastrophic subject) and is the best amateur reporter I've ever heard. As I watch her, I think: In fifteen years, that will be me..... ¶ I am awfully relieved to get this writing topic instead of the expository; with this one, I have something to say. I have always been a camera magnet; I adore being videotaped or recorded in any way. I'm on the News Team at school, I'm an excellent writer and speaker, and if I don't know how to do anything with a video camera, you're the Easter Bunny. When I was younger, I'd sit in front of a desk at home, read news stories off the front page of the News-Press, and turn on the video camera. I'd magically transform into Dianne!
¶ A second reason that I'd be an excellent choice for "student reporter" is that I have

been repeatedly exposed to real live news taping. Not only at school, either! My mother is an extremely successful businesswoman, and the local station often calls and asks for permission to record and interview her at her place of business. This has happened about 5 times, and I have had the privilege of being present every time! The whole shebang comes right into her retail store and unloads itself right in the middle of everything. Once, the reporter even asked if I might be allowed to be interviewed about Beanie Babies. I had my twenty-five seconds of live fame right there (and I loved it!) ¶ The last reason I think I should be selected is because I certainly have a knack for writing. I wrote an editorial to the local newspaper as a Language Arts assignment, and one month later, there I was! My picture was on the same page as Al Gore's. I also find myself writing fictional stories on the computer at home ALL the time. ¶ As I run, headfirst, into my adult life, I am thinking hard about what career I'd like to persue. I believe I have settled on something, though. I will take my dream one step at a time, and hopefully become the next Dianne Sawyer, then, maybe, Connie Chung. (Oh yeah - if I am chosen, please call me "Lil' Dianne!)

Score Point 6

This response is focused and purposeful. The organizational pattern and substantial support contribute to a sense of completeness. The writer's desire to be the next Diane Sawyer demonstrates a commitment to and involvement with the subject. This "desire" is first presented in the introduction and referred to again in the body of the paper and in the conclusion: "I'd magically transform into Dianne!" and "I will take my dream one step at a time, and hopefully become the next Dianne Sawyer, then, maybe, Connie Chung. (Oh yeah - if I am chosen, please call me 'Lil' Dianne!)" The writer demonstrates a mature command of language with freshness of expression: "I wrote an editorial to the local newspaper as a Language Arts assignment, and one month later, there I was! My picture was on the same page as Al Gore's." Sentence structure is varied, and few convention errors occur.

38

"A Dream Come True"

"This is Dan Rather reporting, back to you John." I wish that could be me. When I found out a local TV station was going to hire a student reporter, I knew that reporting job was going to be mine. Some of the many reason that they should hire me for this exciting job are my experience, the intelligent questions I ask, and reporting is in the family.

First of all, my experience as a reporter exceeds that of many other people. In my school's news show, _____, I am the chief reporter. Since sixth grade I have interviewed administrators, school security teachers, and school athletes. In fact, earlier this year I was responsible for interviewing our senator when he came to _____. After the interview he shook my hand, and told me to keep up the good work.

Secondly, if I was a TV reporter I would ask the important questions that really matter to the people watching or listening to the broadcast. My idea is to tell the viewers a few days before who I am interviewing. That way, they can write to the station the questions they want me to ask. Even alone my questions are very intelligent. I've sent in questions to other stations and when the anchors read them they were surprised a 13 year old could write such detailed questions. Between my wit and viewer questions, I believe I would be the best reporter for the job.

Finally, reporting is sort of in my blood.

My cousin, _____, is an on site reporter for CBS News. When I was 8, my cousin took me to a site in front of the Whitehouse and let me watch an interview of state representitive From that moment on I've wanted to be a reporter. an I have since worked to make my camera shyness obsolete. That has given me the courage to become the prospective future reporter I am now.

I hope the above reasons have persuaded you to hire me as a TV reporter. My love of reporting supasses many others and my intelligent questions, experience, and family ties with reporting go unmatched. I possess the skills to use and the will to learn to become one of the greatest reporters ever.

Score Point 5

This response is focused on the topic, and its organizational pattern includes an imaginative introduction, persuasive middle section, and a summarizing conclusion. Internal organization allows for a logical progression of ideas within each argument. The development of support is ample and specific: "In my schools news show, _____, I am the cheif reporter. Since sixth grade I have interviewed administrators, school security, teachers, and school athletes." Personal anecdotes are provided for each point: "I've sent in questions to other stations and when the anchors read them they were surprised a 13 year old could write such detailed questions." However, the "CBS News" anecdote needs further development. How does the interview with the state representative influence the student to become a reporter? What advice did the writer's cousin give about overcoming "camera shyness?" A mature command of language, including precise word choice, is demonstrated. Sentences are varied, and conventions are generally followed.

To improve this response, the student needs more consistent elaboration of support. 40

Dear Producer of UPN News at 6:00:

I am writing to you in reference to the student you are hiring for the evening news program. I know that many people have already called in trying to get the job, this is the reason I am writing to you. I think that I would be fit for the job. First of all I take acting classes, where I am being taught many things about talking in front of a camera. Also, I want to become a News Reporter, but one of the main reasons why I should be hired is because I've had experience. It would make me very happy to get the job!

To begin with, I go to acting classes. Lately we've been working alot with expressing what we are saying through expressions on our face. For example, if I had the job and I had to say something shocking, I could make my facial expressions look shocking, this way the viewer would get more interested in what they are seeing. Moreover the fact that I can talk clearly and loudly which I am also being taught in my acting classes.

Secondly, my career goal for the future is to become a News Reporter. I've always had a passion towards this career. I would love to sit in front of a camera and talk about things that are happening around the world. I would like to know how it feels to be seen by more than one million people. It would be a dream for me to get this job!

Last but not least I've had experience. You might think I am lying but I amnot. From my acting classes they send people to castings, I was chosen

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in one to do a t.v. program in which I am a news reporter. It was a teenagers show, so mostly what I had to talk about were drugs, gangs, pregnancy etc. I know all of the things I need to know about the set where everything is going to be filmed. I was taught all of this before we filmed the t.v. show.

As one can see I have all of the qualifications to become a News Reporter. I take acting classes which is a great advantage when it comes to expressing and talking. I like the News business; I would do the job with all my love because this is what I like doing. And the experience I've had wouldn't make it so much harder on you guys, because then you would have to teach the person you choose everything about filming and expressing. I hope I work with you soon. Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,

Score Point 5

The writing focuses on the topic and employs a topical organizational pattern. The introduction provides more than a simple listing of three arguments. Each of the arguments is skillfully presented and woven into the introduction by effective transitional devices. Support is ample, not substantial. The fourth paragraph includes a personal anecdote about the writer's previous experience as a news reporter: "From my acting classes they send people to castings, I was chosen in one to do a t.v. program in which I am a news reporter. It was a teenager's show, so mostly what I had to talk about were drugs, gangs, pregnancy etc." A higher score point response would elaborate on the student's effectiveness as a news reporter. However, the student sometimes demonstrates a mature command of language and a precise choice of words: "facial expressions," "passion towards this career," and "castings." Sentences are varied, and conventions are generally followed.

More precise word choice and more substantial support, including examples and illustrations, would strengthen this response.

42

I'm better. It's like this all the others are good but I'm better. I hold high ranking contacts, usually have a good view of what is or has happened. Also I am reliable, I check out things to confirm them or disproe them, I make sure my sources are well placed and very reliable. Such as my high ranking contacts are.

I'm well known. I also know good people to have as contacts, and while I wont disclose names I will say this, my contacts are high on a long chain of command. I get the scoop from them on people & things before students even hear rumors of it. Also I am there often when important decisions or actions are made and carried out.

I get in there. No matter if it's a simply spelling bee gone bad, or a fight. In fact I already could give you detailed information on last weeks fight between a girl and a bus driver. I was thier and checked everything to the drivers age, I always get the facts.

Dangerous, possibly. Fun, definitally. I check out fights and cafeteria food alike. If someone threatens me I go further faster because I know I am onto something really hot. Nothing and no one will now or ever stop me from doing any and all possible things, within my power, to find the truth. I hope this helps prove I'm better.

Anything. Is exactly what I will do. I make good friends with people high up, have a nack for being where the action goes on and get a good view of it, and also I am not afriad to confirm or disprove what my contacts, or rumors going around, say. This is why you should hire me for the job of your student reporter.

Score Point 4

This response is focused on the topic and the persuasive task. The organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas following from the opening thesis: "I'm better." Support is adequate, but needs more elaboration to receive a higher score. The first reason includes some vague and general information: "I'm well known. I also know good people to have as contacts, and while I won't disclose names I will say this, my contacts are high on a long chain of command. I get the scoop from them on people & things before students even hear rumors of it. Also I am there often when important descions or actions are made and carried out." How does the student have access to information before everyone else? Is the writer a member of the student government association or the school newspaper staff? The personal example used in the second reason should include more specific details to enhance the reader's understanding. The third reason presents a persuasive argument and uses fragments purposefully: "Dangerous, possibly. Fun, definitally." In a higher score point response, reasons would be more consistently developed. Word choice is adequate, and there is variation in sentence structure. Basic conventions are generally followed, and errors in sentence structure do not impede meaning.

Consistently developed support, refined word choice, and corrected convention and sentence structure errors would improve this response.

Have you ever wanted to be something so bad and you had a shot at it? Well thats happening right now! I would like you to pick me as your new student reporter for these three reasons! I have always dreamed of becoming a tv reporter. I am very educated. Last but not least I am a responsable person.

I think you should pick me because I love reporters and I would love to be one myself. Reporters get to travel and meet famous people from all over the world. The truth is when I was a kid I had my own little reporter kit. I always carried a notebook so if something happened I would have a story to write about. Today I carry a notepad in my wallet just in case.

Second of all I am very educated meaning smart. I have straight A's in all my classes. In my language and reading class we write essays all the time. I also am a smooth talker I can get any story any time any were. I am twice as fast as lightning.

I also am a very responsable kid. At my house I do the dishes every day after I am done eating. I feed the dogs when I am done washing the dishes. After I am done

washing the dishes I feed my four dogs on a Schedual. AFter I feed the dogs I do the laundry. Then after that I clean the whole house including the Garage. I do all this on my own. I never get any help Just like reporters

In conclusion I think you should choose me as your new tv reporter you wouldnt regret this because of my three reasons. I realy want to be a reporter. I am very well educated. I am one of the moot responsible kids in my school

Score Point 4

The response is tightly focused on the persuasive task. An organizational pattern is apparent, beginning with an introduction to cite the writer's arguments, a middle section to address those arguments, and a vague conclusion. This organizational strategy, along with adequate support for the writer's stance, provides some sense of completeness. Support is adequate, and the first argument is supported with a personal anecdote: "The truth is when I was a kid I had my own little reporter kit. I always carried a notebook so if something happened I would have a story to write about. Today I carry a notepad in my wallet just in case." The second and third arguments include list-like extensions and some repetition: "I feed the dogs when I am done washing the dishes. After I am done washing the dishes I feed my four dogs on a schedual." Sentence structure is varied, and word choice is adequate. Conventions are generally correct.

More consistent elaboration of supporting ideas and more precise choice of words would enhance this response.

46

Choose Me

Dear Channel 7,

I've been hearing that you have decided to hire a student reporter. I think that I would be perfect for the job. I like to do news, and be on television. I think that I would be better than anyone else for the job because, I am very well spoken, a great writer, and an exellent reporter.

First of all I am a very well spoken person. I love speaking, everything that I do involves speaking. I can speak very well publically. I also have experience in speaking in front of a crowd. I also have a very low rate of nervousness because, I am just not a very nervous person.

Not only am I a great speaking person, I am also a great writer. I am a very good journalist. I have won many awards, and trophies for writing. I may be young but this 14 year old can write as well as any 41 year old person. I am not afraid to write anything or write anything.

Thirdly, I am an exellent reporter. I report stories very well. I can do stories that are based on fact, or based on opinion. Also some people are sometimes scarred to report on things of different natures. I am the kind of person that will report on anything no matter what nature of it is.

In conclusion I think that I am the best man for the job. I don't think that anyone else can

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do the job as well as I can. I will take reporting news to the next level. No one has the next generation of flavor that I can bring to the business. I think that I should get the job because, I am very well spoken, a great writer, and an exellent reporter.

Sincerely,

Score Point 3

The writing is focused on the topic. Although the response has a clear beginning, middle, and end, it fails to achieve a sense of completeness (organization and support). The middle consists of reasons extended with little bits of information: "First of all I am a very well spoken person. I love speaking, everything that I do involves speaking. I can speak very well publically. I also have experience in speaking in front of a crowd. I also have a very low rate of nervousness because, I am just not a very nervous person." What public speaking engagements has the writer participated in? How did the writer determine that these events were successful? The second reason includes some specific details that need further explanation, and the third reason is vague and general. Word choice is limited, predictable, and vague. However, sentence structure variation is attempted, and errors in conventions do not impede meaning.

Elaborated support, refined word choice, and corrected convention and spelling errors would improve this response.

48

If I would be chosen as the Student reporter It would be a good choice because I get along with people very well and that is important for 2 main reasons they are I could get the inside scoop on things and I would get along hopefully with the people I would work with.

If you chose ME as a Student reporter I could get the inside scoop that some grownups just can't get especily if it involes teens or Kids. I am small so I could hide places other people can't like in a trash can, a suitcase, and a small closet with out being seen. I am also just a teen and most people tell me their problems even if they don't really Know me that well. That is how I could get the inside scoop.

If I was to become your student reporter I would have to get along with the people I would work with. Since I get along with people it should not be a problem because even if they did not like me I would little favors for them and so forth. I think that getting along with the people you work with is an important because it would be harder for people to do a Job. If I get along with the people at that job I would be a great adiction to your Staff and I could help out a lot.

If you would pleas chose me as the Student reporter it would be a good choice because I get along with people very well and that is important for 2 main reasons they are I could get the inside Scoop on things and I would get along hopefully with the people I would work with. All in All I think I would be a good person for the job and thak you for taking the time to read this.

Score Point 3

This response is focused on the topic. The apparent organizational pattern is topical [an introduction, a middle section consisting of two reasons ("I could get the inside scoop on things and I would get along hopefully with the people I would work with"), and a brief conclusion]. The second paragraph includes some specific details: "I am small so I could hide places other people can't like in a trash can, a suitcase, and a small closet without being seen. I am also just a teen and most people tell me their problems even if they don't really know me that well." The third paragraph is vague and general: "Since I get along with people it should not be a problem because even if they did not like me I would little favors for them and so forth. I think that getting along with the people you work with is an important because it would be harder for people to do a job." What favors would the writer do for co-workers? What positive or negative experiences has the writer had while working with a group? Word choice is limited and vague. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not impede understanding.

This response would be improved by elaboration of the supporting details, precision in word choice, and correction of convention and sentence structure errors.

49

Dear Local T.V. Stations,

Hi, My name is
From middle
School. I'd like to Be your
New Student reporter For the
Evening news. I Know I'm only
a Student, But I could help your
program out alot. I have a loud
Voice, which could help viewers at
home here the correct news), I
could start a School newspaper
that would come out everyWeek
and raise real money, This could
help your Funding For things that
you could use around the T.V. Station.
I have Vivid imagination and could
come up with stories know one
would think OF. I am also good
in production and could help
your theme Songs, Logo's, Studios,
and more. I give 100 and 10 percent
everday and that why I want to work
For you.

Score Point 2

This response is focused, and an organizational pattern is attempted. Support consists of one reason ("I know I'm only a student, but I could help your program out alot") followed by a list of ways the student could help. Each "way" is extended with a little added information: "I could start a school newspaper that would come out every week and raise real money (This could help your funding for things that you could use around the T.V. station)." Word choice is limited. Errors in sentence structure, basic conventions, and spelling do not impede understanding.

This response needs an improved organizational pattern, elaborated support, refined word choice, varied sentence structure, and corrected convention errors to receive a higher score.

50

I think everyone should have a job that they like. One of my dreams has been about being a reporter. I think I would be perfect for the job.

One of the ways is qualifications. I have all the qualificaxions that are needed and know a great deal more.

Another way I'd be good for the job is how I feel about being on camera. Most of my life has been recorded and I've never shied away from the camera.

A reason I myself would like to go is for the experience alone. This job will give me a lot of real life experience that I don't have.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank you for taking the time and effort to reach out and help students.

Score Point 2

The response is related to the topic. Although the author attempts to organize using a traditional pattern, the main ideas are simply listed and could be rearranged in any order and retain the same meaning. Support for the writer's position that "I would be perfect for the job" is vague and general. Each main idea (a way or a reason) is extended with little bits of information. The first and third reasons contain little added information beyond repetition, but the second reason is more specific: "Another way I'd be good for the job is how I feel about being on camera. Most of my life has been recorded and I've never shied away from the camera." Word choice is adequate, and there is an attempt to vary sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is demonstrated.

Better organization, more effective transitional devices, more specific support, and more precise word choice are needed to improve this response.

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Hi my name is . I've been writing to because the student reported for your L/A station for the longest time. I make very good grades, I am very good at getting good reports. What ever, who ever, and when ever you want a report, I can get it.

Score Point 1

The writing in this brief response minimally addresses the topic. This sparse response does not demonstrate an organizational pattern. The sentences can be rearranged in any order and retain the same meaning. Support consists of one bare reason ("I make very good grades") and one reason extended by a little additional information ("I am very good at getting good reports. What ever, who ever, and when ever you want a report, I can get it"). Word choice is limited and vague, but conventions are generally correct.

A more organized response, more effective support, and more precise word choice are needed to improve this paper.

52

The local T.V. Station should choose me because, I am honest, and like to be on T.V., I have good, grades so far in School, I have more free time. I know lots of people.

Score Point 1

This brief response minimally addresses the topic, and there is no organizational pattern. Support consists of a list of five bare reasons: "The local T.V. Station should choose me because, I am honest, and like to be on T.V., I have good grades so far in school, I have more free time. I know lots of people." Word choice is limited and vague, and there are errors in sentence structure and punctuation in this brief response.

A developed organizational pattern, elaborated support, refined word choice, improved sentence structure, and corrected conventions are needed for a higher score.

53

One day I met at a book store and we started to talk about school and I ask hem wait school he went to and he sad .J.H and I sad I went there to and I hem he is and he sad 13 and I sad I am 13 to and then I ask what grad his in and he sad 8th grad and I sad I was in 8th grad to and he sad Cool and then I sad I have to go now and I will see you at school tomorrow ok he sad and meet me in the 8th grad hall way at 8:00 OK.

The next morring got dress and went to school.

Unscorable

This response is unscorable. The writing does not indicate that the writer read and attempted to respond to the prompt.

54

APPENDIX A

MEMBERS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE WRITING ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1998-1999

Janet Allen
Professor
University of Central Florida

Cherie Boone
Testing Specialist
Palm Beach County

Bill Christofferson
Language Arts Teacher
Hendry County

Fielding Hossley
Language Arts Teacher
Brevard County

Max Hutto
Teacher on Special Assignment
Language Arts
Hillsborough County

Claudette McRae
Assistant Principal
Jefferson County

Mary Mikel
Language Arts Teacher
Okaloosa County

Gayle Mooring
Language Arts Teacher
Orange County

Cynthia Portier
Language Arts Teacher
Broward County

Lisa Sanford
Testing Specialist
Marion County

Frank Santa Maria
Language Arts Teacher
Charlotte County

Kathy Steckloff
Language Arts Resource Teacher
Duval County

Judy Underhill
Language Arts Teacher
Pinellas County

Randee Winterbottom
Language Arts Specialist
Leon County

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APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

Census Writing Assessment – testing of all students in a particular grade level to measure the writing proficiency of students and schools

Conventions – commonly accepted rules of edited American English (e.g., spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence variety)

Draft – preliminary version of a piece of writing that may need revision of details, organization, and conventions

Expository Writing – writing that gives information, explains why or how, clarifies a process, or defines a concept

Field Test – testing a representative sample of the state's student population to determine the effectiveness of an assessment instrument

Focus – relationship of supporting details to the main idea, theme, or unifying point

Loosely Related – only slightly related

Extraneous – not related

Holistic Scoring – method by which trained readers evaluate the overall quality of a piece of writing

Narrative Writing – writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event

Organization – structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the transitional terms and devices used to arrange the ideas

Transitional Devices – words, terms, phrases, and sentence variations used to arrange and signal the movement of ideas. For example, "next, and then, in the end, another reason, after that we went, another way to look at it" are transitional devices.

Conclusion – statements or sentences used to conclude a paper

Persuasive Writing – writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action

Portfolio Writing Assessment – collection and scoring of various writing assignments produced during a semester or school year

Production Writing Assessment – measure of a student's performance on a task that requires a written response to a prompt

Project Writing Assessment – a multi-day cooperative planning and rewriting process that involves the teacher or peers or both

Prompt – writing assignment that states the writer's task, including the topic and purpose of the writing

Rangefinders – student responses used to illustrate score points on the rubric

Reader – person trained to score student responses

Response – writing that is stimulated by a prompt

Rubric – scoring criteria at each score point of the scale

Support – quality of details illustrating or explaining the central theme

Bare – use of simple lists that focus on events or reasons. For example, "I like to go to school because it is fun."

Extended — use of information that begins to clarify meaning. For example, "I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs."

Elaborated — use of additional details, anecdotes, illustrations, and examples that further clarifies meaning. Information that answers the question, "What do you mean?" For example, "I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs instead of just reading about frogs in books. Experiments allow us to have the fun of discovering for ourselves how far and fast frogs can jump and what kinds of food frogs like to eat." The elaboration could also provide a detailed description of the experiments.

Writing Process – recursive steps of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, evaluating, and sharing that are used in the development of a piece of writing

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FLORIDA WRITING ASSESSMENT

The assessment of writing, by its nature, incorporates the assessment of higher-order thinking skills because students are required to generate and develop ideas that form the basis of their written responses. Instructional programs that emphasize higher-order thinking skills in all subjects and grade levels will have a positive influence on students' writing proficiency.

Research indicates there is a strong relationship between reading and effective writing. Studies show that an active reader, one who analyzes passages and makes logical predictions before and during reading, uses the higher-order thinking skills associated with effective writing. Active readers prepare for reading by using illustrations, titles, and subheading cues and by analyzing passages through self-questioning, predicting, skimming, and summarizing.

Research on the ability to write effectively shows that improvement in writing can be made only when students receive feedback or explanations about their writing. For example, if a student is not told that effective writing creates images in a reader's mind, then a student will continue to simply list rather than elaborate reasons or arguments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT- AND SCHOOL-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS

Administrators have the unique opportunity to directly influence the establishment and maintenance of writing programs. Administrators can provide leadership to writing instruction programs by

- ensuring that *Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 8* is available to all junior high or middle school teachers;
- bringing teachers together to discuss how to use *Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 8;*
- establishing a literacy program that sets high standards for writing across all subject areas and grade levels;
- bringing teachers together to discuss the possibilities of requiring writing in all subject areas and grade levels;
- assisting teachers in developing school-level writing expectations and assessment programs, such as portfolio assessment or schoolwide assessment of writing samples;
- scheduling inservice writing instruction and holistic scoring workshops for teachers and parents;
- emphasizing that writing should not be used as punishment;
- providing a print-rich environment in every classroom;
- including reference materials on writing in the schools' professional libraries; and
- publishing and celebrating students' writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Teachers' daily contact with students gives teachers many opportunities to directly influence students' attitudes toward writing. Instruction in writing should regularly involve the full writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Displaying or publishing written materials helps students experience writing successes.

Real-world writing often requires demand writing (writing a response to a topic in a short period of time); therefore, writing instruction should include having students independently read a topic, plan a response, and write a response within a specified time frame.

Teachers can prepare their students for the writing assessment through a number of teacher-generated activities, including having students

- write responses to questions as an alternative to selecting correct responses on a multiple-choice test;
- read passages and generate written summary questions;
- write their views on current events before or after the events have been discussed in class;
- critique written pieces (e.g., published works and student writings);
- read and analyze different types of writing (e.g., biographies, science fiction, fantasies, historical accounts, speeches, and news reports);
- write letters to a newspaper editor to explain their views on a particular issue or to refute the views of another person;
- write stories about real or imagined events;
- write descriptions of how things look, smell, taste, sound, and feel;
- write endings for unfinished fictional and nonfictional stories;
- write personal anecdotes and incorporate them into writing that either explains or persuades;
- discuss how text would be different if illustrations were included; and
- maintain subject-area portfolios to document progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents' and guardians' daily contact with children provides them with the unique opportunity to be involved with their children's education inside and outside the classroom. Parents and guardians can encourage their children's writing by

- talking about what the children have read and written at home and at school;
- having their children write letters to friends and relatives;
- writing notes to their children with instructions for chores;
- speaking with teachers about the children's writing development;
- talking with the teachers and the children about writing portfolios;
- promoting writing for a variety of purposes in their children's school curriculum;
- displaying stories, essays, or other written work at home on the refrigerator or a bulletin board; and
- demonstrating the value of writing in real-life situations (e.g., letters to the editor of the local newspaper; letters of inquiry, complaint, or application; and letters to family and friends).

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF THE ASSESSMENT DIRECTIONS, WRITING FOLDER, AND PLANNING SHEET

ASSESSMENT DIRECTIONS

For this assessment, test administrators read to students the following directions:

Today you are going to do a writing exercise that will provide us with important information about students' ability to write. It is important for you to do as well as you can.

You may use the planning sheet for jotting down ideas and planning and organizing what you will write. The prompt on page 2 of your writing folder explains what you are going to write about and gives you some ideas for planning your writing.

After using your planning sheet to plan what you will write, begin the writing that will be scored on page 3 of your folder. You may continue your writing on page 4 of your folder. You do not have to fill up both of these pages, but you should be sure that you completely respond to the prompt on page 2 of your folder.

You may skip lines as you write in your folder, but remember that this will shorten the space in which you have to write.

Your writing may be about something that is real or make believe, but remember, you are to write ONLY about the prompt on page 2 of your folder.

You may give your writing a title if you would like, but you do not have to title your writing.

You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.

You may either print or write in cursive. It is important to write as neatly as possible.

The writing in your folder should be easy to read and should show that you can organize and express your thoughts clearly and completely.

I cannot read your prompt to you or help you plan what to write. You must read and plan yourself. Remember, you must first read your prompt and then plan what you will write.

You have a total of 45 minutes to read, plan, and respond to your prompt. I will let you know when you have 10 minutes left.

If you finish early, please revise and edit the writing in your folder.

NAME _____

DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL _____

This is a secure document. Do NOT throw this folder away!

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	M

Florida Writing Assessment Program

GRADE 8 CENSUS 1999

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER/ FLORIDA STUDENT NUMBER IDENTIFIER

DISTRICT/SCHOOL NUMBER

RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND

- ○ White (not of Hispanic origin)
- ○ Black (not of Hispanic origin)
- ○ Hispanic
- ○ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ○ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ○ Multiracial/Multiethnic

SEX

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

LANGUAGE

- ○ English
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Other

BARCODE SECURITY ID # AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT

- (A) Educable Mentally Handicapped
- (B) Trainable Mentally Handicapped
- (C) Orthopedically Impaired
- (F) Speech Impaired
- (G) Language Impaired
- (H) Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- (I) Visually Impaired
- (J) Emotionally Handicapped
- (K) Specific Learning Disabled
- (L) Gifted
- (M) Hospital/Homebound
- (N) Profoundly Mentally Handicapped
- (O) Dual-Sensory Impaired
- (P) Autistic
- (Q) Severely Emotionally Disturbed
- (S) Traumatic Brain Injured
- (T) Developmentally Delayed
- (V) Other Health Impaired

LEP

Receiving ESOL services for:

- ○ 2 years or less
- ○ More than 2 years

SECTION 504?

- ○ Yes

ESE AND LEP MODIFICATION TYPE

- ○ Student Tested Indiv. or Small Group
- ○ Student Tested in Several Sessions
- ○ Student Given Additional Time
- ○ Student Used Mechanical Device(s)
- ○ Student Used Large Print Folder
- ○ Student Used Braille Folder
- ○ Proctor Transcribed Response
- ○ Proctor Read Prompt
- ○ Proctor Signed Prompt
- ○ LEP Student Received Assistance in Heritage Language
- ○ LEP Student Used Approved Dictionary

Note: Check the barcode to the left to see if this writing folder is preidentified. All grids for which information was received have been properly noted in the barcode and cannot be changed on this document. Any missing demographic information CAN be handgridded to complete this student's information. If any preidentified information for this student is incorrect, this writing folder should be invalidated and a new (blank) document should be handgridded. If NO student information is contained in the barcode, then this is not a preidentified writing folder and all information MUST be handgridded.

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TOPIC

Writing Situation:

Everyone has jobs or chores.

Directions for Writing:

Before you begin writing, think about one of your jobs or chores.

Now explain to the reader of your paper why you do your job or chore.

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE

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State of Florida
Department of State
1998

63

64

STUDENT'S NAME _____

PLANNING SHEET

(Remember, use this sheet for planning what you will write. The writing on this sheet will not be scored. Only the writing on pages 3 and 4 of the writing folder will be scored.)

ISD1167

APPENDIX E

PROMPT SPECIFICATIONS AND COMMITTEE EVALUATION FORM

SPECIFICATION FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING PROMPTS

Purpose of prompt specification – To ensure that all prompts tell the students the subject (topic) and purpose of writing.

Definition of exposition – It is writing that gives information, explains how or why, clarifies a process, or defines a concept. Though objective and not dependent on emotion, expository writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to inform, clarify, explain, define, or instruct.

Cue words that should be used in expository prompts are "why," "how," and "what."

Introduction

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions For Writing. Each element of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation

The writing situation statement directs the student to write on a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This topic, established by a key word or phrase or the student's narrowing of it, serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the theme. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning of the theme by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the theme to suit his or her own plan. An example is

> *Everyone has jobs or chores. These may be things people do because they are asked to do them or because doing the job or chore makes them feel good about themselves.*

Directions for Writing

The directions for writing actually include a strategy statement that is intended to suggest an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started. It provides the beginning of a possible plan for the writer's piece. An example is

> *Think about one of your jobs or chores.*
>
> *Now explain why you do your job or chore.*

SPECIFICATION FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPTS

Purpose of prompt specification – To ensure that all prompts tell the students the subject (topic), purpose, and audience.

Definition of persuasion – It is writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action. If it is important to present other sides of an issue, the writer does so, but in a way that makes his or her position clear. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to convince the reader of something.

Cue words that should be used in persuasive prompts are "convince," "persuade," and "why." Persuasive prompts should avoid the term "how" because it tends to elicit narrative writing.

Introduction

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions For Writing. Each element of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation

The writing situation statement directs the student to write on a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This topic, established by a key word or phrase or the student's narrowing of it, serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the theme. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning of the theme by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the theme to suit his or her own plan. An example is

> *The principal of your school has been asked to discuss with a parent group the effect watching television has on students' grades.*

Directions for Writing

The directions for writing actually include a strategy statement that is intended to suggest an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started. It provides the beginning of a possible plan for the writer's piece. An example is

> *Think about the effect watching television has on your grades and your friends' grades.*
>
> *Now write to convince your principal to accept your point of view on the effect watching television has on grades.*

PROMPT EVALUATION FORM

Purpose of Writing _____

Prompt Number _____ Grade Level_____

Interest Level of Prompt

1. Will students find the topic interesting? Yes ____ No ____
2. Will students be able to relate to the topic? Yes ____ No ____

Bias in Prompt

3. Is the topic of the prompt biased? Yes ____ No ____
4. Is the wording of the prompt biased? Yes ____ No ____
5. Is the prior knowledge required to write on the topic biased? Yes ____ No ____
6. Will the prompt tend to elicit responses that are unduly emotional or in some other way difficult for readers to fairly judge? Yes ____ No ____

Purpose of Writing

7. Are the requirements of the prompt clear? Yes ____ No ____
8. Will the prompt tend to elicit writing in the desired purpose of writing? Yes ____ No ____

Wording of Prompt

9. Is the wording of the prompt misleading? Yes ____ No ____
10. Are the syntax, vocabulary, and readability of the prompt appropriate for the majority of students? Yes ____ No ____

Organization of Response

11. Will the prompt tend to elicit listing-type responses or clichés? Yes ____ No ____
12. Is the prompt at fault for over-suggesting a method of organization? Yes ____ No ____
13. Will the prompt fail to suggest a method of organization? Yes ____ No ____
14. Will students be able to fully respond to the prompt within the designated testing period? Yes ____ No ____

Should the prompt be part of the prompt pool? Yes ____ No ____

Reviewer's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F

READER BIAS

Reader bias refers to personal factors that have no basis in the scoring criteria or rubric, but have an effect on a reader's perception of a student response. Readers are trained to avoid these biases because research indicates that biases can interfere with the consistent application of the scoring rubric.

1. **Appearance of Response**. How does the paper look at first glance? Handwriting, neatness, and margins are not part of Florida's scoring criteria.

2. **Length of Response.** How long is the response? Quality, not quantity, is part of Florida's scoring criteria.

3. **Fatigue of Reader.** How many responses has the reader scored? Each student will receive a score, and the score must reflect the scoring standards and not the reader's fatigue.

4. **Repetition of Responses.** How many responses have looked a great deal alike? In spite of the sameness of some responses, each response was written by an individual student who will be receiving a score report.

5. **Clashes with Content.** Has the student used vulgar or violent content? Is the response mundane? A reader's agreement with a student's point of view or use of language is not part of Florida's scoring criteria.

6. **Reactions to Style.** Does the student begin sentences with "And" or "But," use an informal tone, use the first person, use clichés, place the thesis statement in the conclusion rather than in the introduction, or use one-sentence paragraphs? Is the reader unduly influenced by the use of one well-turned phrase in what otherwise is a nonillustrative response? Florida's scoring criteria do not mandate a particular style.

7. **Reactions to Perceived Personality of the Writer.** Does the student come across as brash, shy, cute, honest, willing to take a chance, or being like the reader was at that age? Readers are scoring the words written in the folder, not the student's personality. Personality is not part of Florida's scoring criteria.

8. **Reactions to Writing Criteria from Other Assessments or to Previous Experience with Writing Instruction.** Does the reader have personal reactions to the scoring criteria for other states' or grades' responses, the issue of the developmental appropriateness of the rubric, or the soundness of the administration of the assessment? Before being used statewide, the prompts and rubrics of the Florida Writing Assessment Program were developed by advisory committees of Florida educators and citizens and were verified by use with hundreds of students. The administration procedures and scoring standards were analyzed and validated by the committees. The reader's role is to score the responses according to the scoring criteria rather than to react to the administration procedures or the scoring criteria.

APPENDIX G

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR EACH SCORE POINT

GRADE 8

6 Points

According to the rubric, the writing is tightly focused, logically organized, and substantially developed. It demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct.

A score of 6 does not mean that the paper is perfect. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- organization of internal elements (a beginning, middle, and end for each idea and not just for the total paper);
- elaboration of all supporting details; and
- precision and maturity of word choice.

5 Points

According to the rubric, the writing is focused, and supporting ideas are amply developed. However, lapses in organization may occur. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct.

In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, argument, or explanation to the next;
- elaborating the supporting details;
- improving the word choice; and
- increasing the sentence variety.

4 Points

According to the rubric, the writing is focused but may contain extraneous information, may lack internal organization, and may include weak support or examples. Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure is varied. Conventions are generally correct.

In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- removing extraneous information;
- strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, argument, or explanation to the next;
- developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaborations, or both;
- improving word choice; and
- increasing sentence variety.

3 Points

According to the rubric, the writing is generally focused but may contain extraneous information, a simplistic organizational pattern, and undeveloped details or examples. Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure is simple. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- removing extraneous information;
- developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, end, and transitional devices;
- developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaborations, or both;
- improving word choice; and
- increasing sentence variety.

2 Points

According to the rubric, the writing may show little relationship to the topic, little evidence of an organizational pattern, and little relevant support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simple construction, and convention errors occur.

In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- focusing on the assigned topic;
- developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, end, and transitional devices;
- extending supporting ideas;

- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety; and
- correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure errors.

1 Point

According to the rubric, the writing only minimally addresses the topic. There is no organizational pattern and little or no support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simple construction, and convention errors occur.

In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- focusing on the assigned topic;
- developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, and end;
- extending supporting ideas;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety; and
- correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence construction errors.

Unscorable – Response Not Related to Assigned Topic

According to the rubric, the writing did not address the assigned topic. This score category is not a statement about the quality of the writing; instead it is a statement about the focus of the writing.

The writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes focusing on the assigned topic.

Unscorable – No Response or Unreadable Response

According to the rubric, there was no response or an unreadable response.

The writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- arranging words so that meaning is conveyed or
- writing a sufficient amount and addressing the prompt so that scoring is facilitated.

APPENDIX H

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Atwell, Nancy. *Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

This is a book for teachers who are ready to put writing to work across the curriculum – to abandon the encyclopedia-based approach and ask their students to write as literary critics, scientists, historians, and mathematicians.

Atwell, Nancy. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

This is a convincing account of Atwell's experiences in an eighth grade classroom. She shares her discoveries about what is wrong with traditional methods of teaching reading and writing to middle school students and her thoughts about what is helpful in classroom workshops for young readers and writers.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1986.

Readers will learn from Calkins how teachers can help K-6 students use the writing process and improve their writing.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *Lessons from a Child.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.

In this story of one child's growth in writing, Calkins describes a workshop approach to teaching writing that has spread to classrooms around the country.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick and Shelly Harwayne. *Living Between the Lines.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

This is an invitation to bring new life into reading-writing workshops. This book weaves insights, practical suggestions, references, and anecdotes into an inspirational story.

Caplan, Rebekah. *Writers in Training.* Palo Alto, CA: Dale Seymour Publications, 1985.

In this practical handbook on techniques and activities, Caplan outlines her "Show not Tell" approach for descriptive essays, her strategies for argumentative essays, and her many other ideas for good writing.

Clark, Roy Peter. *Free to Write.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1987.

This book answers the questions about how to work writing into the curriculum, how to create a classroom environment that encourages writing, how to conference with students about their writing, and how to get students to revise and edit their work.

Dean, Rosemary and Marie Ponsot. *Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing – What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton and Cook, 1982.

This book presents a revolutionary, inductive approach to teaching composition. It helps students develop elemental skills, not by drill, but by incremental repetition of integrated writing assignments.

Dean, Rosemary and Marie Ponsot. *The Common Sense.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton and Cook, 1985.

This book focuses on the expository essay in an active composing class and stresses the importance of reading aloud.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Elbow's program for learning how to write also works for teachers. Chapter 4 describes how teachers can set up peer response groups in their classrooms.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Through a broad spectrum of ingenious ideas, this book shows how to develop students' natural writing ability.

Florida Department of Education. *Florida Writes!* Tallahassee, FL: Author, 1999.

Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 4; Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 8; and *Florida Writes! Report on the 1999 Assessment, Grade 10* describe the development, purpose, content, and application of the writing assessment program, and they suggest activities that are helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

Gallo, Donald R. *Speaking for Ourselves.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1990.

This book includes autobiographical sketches of notable authors of young adult books.

Goodman, Kenneth S., Yetta M. Goodman, and Wendy J. Hood. *The Whole Language Evaluation Book.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1989.

In order to answer questions about how to evaluate students in a whole language classroom, the authors use ideas that are grounded in proven methods.

Gordon, Naomi, ed. *Classroom Experiences: The Writing Process in Action.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.

This is a collection of articles written by teachers who give accounts of their successes in teaching writing.

Graves, Donald. *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.

This book has become the basic text in the movement that established writing as a central part of literacy education and gave impetus to the whole language approach.

Irvin, Judith. *Reading and the Middle School Student.* Old Tappan, NJ: Allyn and Bacon, 1990.

Significant advances in literacy teaching and learning form a backdrop for this engaging discussion of what middle-level educators need to know to design a successful reading program.

Kiester, Jane Bell. *Caught 'Ya.* Gainesville, FL: Maupin House, 1990.

This is a how-to book that describes a fun and motivational approach to teaching mechanics and usage through a daily revision activity.

Kirby, Dan and Tom Liner. *Inside Out.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.

This is a widely used teacher text about helping junior and senior high students learn to write. This book dispels long-held myths and offers fresh insights.

Moffett, James. *Active Voice: A Writing Program Across the Curriculum.* 2nd ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.

This is a program of writing assignments based on ideas presented in *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* and *Coming on Center.* This edition includes a new chapter, "Bridges: From Personal Writing to Formal Essay."

Murray, Donald. *The Craft of Revision.* Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1991.

This is an excellent book about the writing process.

Murray, Donald. *Expecting the Unexpected: Teaching Myself and Others to Read and Write.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton and Cook, 1982.

The 24 articles in this collection show the range of Murray's interests and concerns as he looks at writing from the writer's as well as the teacher's experience.

Murray, Donald. *Learning by Teaching.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton and Cook, 1982.

This is an excellent book about the writing process.

Nathan, Ruth, Frances Temple, Kathleen Juntenen, and Charles Temple. *Classroom Strategies That Work: An Elementary Teacher's Guide to Process Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.

Classroom Strategies is for teachers who are interested in using process writing but who need detailed suggestions for getting started. This book discusses many ways to enrich and inform young writers.

Newkirk, Thomas. *Critical Thinking and Writing: Reclaiming the Essay.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989.

The author shares his doubts about the thesis-controlled essay and his ideas for the critical-thinking essay.

Newman, Judith M., ed. *Whole Language: Theory in Use.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1985.

Through its 18 chapters, many of which are written by practicing teachers, this book shows how whole language theory can be put into practice.

Parsons, Les. *Response Journals.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

Teachers are taken step by step through a system for using response journals. This book includes ready-to-use pages and students' sample responses.

Perl, Sondra and Nancy Wilson. *Through Teachers' Eyes.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.

The authors spent two years living in the homes of the classroom teachers they observed, teachers who daily faced the challenge of teaching writing.

Rico, Gabriel Lusser. *Writing the Natural Way.* Los Angeles, CA: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1983.

In a practical way, Rico applies important brain research to the teaching of writing. She explains how clustering can be used to find and explore topics and how visuals can be used in the drafting and organizing stages.

Rief, Linda. *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.

Rief discusses the mechanics of writing and reading workshops in a traditional middle school setting and her solutions to the difficulties of teaching process writing and reading to 125 students a day, five days a week.

77

Romano, Tom. *Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1987.

Romano, a ninth grade English teacher for many years, discusses the theory and practice of process writing, methods for grading, respect for student writing, and many other useful topics in a very enthusiastic and readable style.

Routman, Regie. *Invitations.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991.

This book begins where Routman's *Transitions* leaves off. *Invitations* provides in-depth information and step-by-step lessons on such topics as shared reading and writing and journal writing.

Routman, Regie. *Transitions: From Literature to Literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.

This book is designed to present alternatives to skill-oriented basal texts and to provide teachers and parents with the knowledge necessary to make the change.

Ruth, Leo and Sandra Murphy. *Designing Writing Tasks for the Assessment of Writing.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1988.

This is an essential primer for people who are just beginning to develop a large-scale writing assessment program.

Smith, Frank. *Essays Into Literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.

This book contains a number of Smith's classic papers, such as "Twelve Easy Ways to Make Learning to Read Difficult," and some new articles.

Spandel, Vicki and Richard J. Stiggins. *Creating Writers: Linking Assessment and Writing Instruction.* White Plains, NY: Longman, 1990.

This book demonstrates that links can and should exist between the instruction and the assessment of writing.

Stires, Susan, ed. *With Promise: Redefining Reading and Writing Needs for Special Students.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991.

Teachers and researchers confront such issues as labeling, testing, programming, and developing skills for "special" and "at-risk" students in elementary and middle schools. They describe positive environments and holistic approaches for reading and writing.

Tierney, Robert J., Mark Carter, and Laura Desal. *Portfolio Assessment in the Reading/Writing Classroom.* Norwood, MD: Christopher Gordon, Inc., 1991.

This book answers many questions about portfolio assessment and suggests methods for portfolio self-assessment.

Trelease, Jim. *The Read-About Handbook.* New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1982.

This book gives suggestions for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and for reading aloud. An annotated bibliography of children's literature is included.

White, Edward M. *Teaching and Assessing Writing.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1985.

White provides the fundamental skills teachers need to design and evaluate writing assignments and to guide students toward improved writing skills.

Yancy, Kathleen, ed. *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom: An Introduction.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1992.

Classroom teachers from various backgrounds reflect on how using portfolios has shaped their teaching. They discuss ways to introduce portfolios into the classroom, and they describe various models and practices for portfolio projects.

Zemelman, Steven and Harvey Daniels. *A Community of Writers: Teaching Writing in the Junior and Senior High School.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.

This book offers detailed guidance for all aspects of teaching and using writing, from workshop methods to grammar instruction and evaluation.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well,* 4th edition. New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1990.

This is a helpful and readable guide to writing.

Tallahassee, Florida

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